

# THE CAMP FIRE.

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## THE DRUNKARD'S HOME.

V. G. RAMSEY.

It was a little farm house nestled down among the hills. It would have been a pretty place if there had not been about it a look of neglect and decay. The hills were bright with sunshine or charming with weirdly shifting shadows. It was May. The apple trees, that all winter had shivered in the cold, showed that Spring had come. The brown coats had fallen away from the buds, and the soft green leaves were peeping out. The daffodil under the window was pushing up its yellow tips, and under the pine trees by the wayside the mayflowers showed their fragrant blooms. O yes, but for the trail of the serpent, it might have been a pretty and happy home.

A little girl not more than seven years old, stood on the door step. She wore a tattered calico dress and old boots that might have been her mother's. Her eyes were blue, and a mass of golden brown hair lay uncombed over the shoulders. You would have called her pretty, only her face was so thin and sad. She held a few wet sticks in her arms, and gazed with tear-dimmed eyes down the rough road that lead over the hills to the village.

"The doctor is coming," she said, after a while. "I see his gig and the gray horse." Then she opened the door and went into the house.

The doctor drove up, tied his horse to a tree, and went in. The child that we saw at the door was putting the wet sticks into an old, cracked stove that puffed and smoked but gave no heat. In one corner of the room was a low bed with ragged covers, on which a pale woman lay with half shut eyes, a little baby on her breast.

The doctor walked straight to the bed, and taking one of the sick woman's hands in his, placed his finger on her wrist. He had been there before, and had left his patient a few days ago, as he hoped, in a fair way to recovery. Turning to the child he said sharply, "Elsie, where is your father?"

"I don't know," she said, "he has not been home in three days."

"Who takes care of your mother and the baby?"

"I do the best I can, sir," a great sob almost choked her "but since mamma does not speak I do not know what to do."

"What do you give her to eat?"

"She told me how to make gruel; and she ate some, and I ate some, too; but the flour is all gone, and we have had nothing to day."

The doctor sprang to his feet. "Is it possible?" he cried. "You are starving!"

"Yes, sir"—the tears began to flow—"the baby cried this morning, but she has been still since; and mamma has not spoken. I think they are asleep, but I am very cold and hungry."

"No fire and no fuel!" said the doctor, examining the smoking stove. He went back to the bed and took the baby up. "Dead," he said, as he laid it back. Then he found a cup and a little water, and, pouring something from a vial which he took from his pocket, he put it to the woman's lips.

"Too late!" he said, "She cannot swallow."

Just then a woman with a shawl over her head opened the door. She had come from a farmhouse half a mile away.

"I felt uneasy," she said, coming forward, "and thought I would run

over and see how Mrs. Wells is getting along."

"Look!" cried the doctor, "here's a sight which you have never seen before in this Christian land! Misery, starvation, and death! And the brute whom this woman called husband, and the father of these children, is doubtless drunk at the saloon over there." He threw out his hands with a fierce gesture towards the village.

Mrs. Allen cast a look on the bed and comprehended the situation. "Merciful God!" she cried; "must such things be? I feel it in my heart to curse the vipers who are selling the water of death and taking the bread from starving women and children."

"Curse them! Yes, curse them to your heart's content! Every curse will be echoed in heaven."

"But, doctor, who licenses these men? They say they are doing a lawful business—that their license fees helps to support the government, to increase the school fund, to make our roads and build our bridges. My heart is sick, and I feel that there is a fault somewhere besides in the liquor-sellers. Are we all partaking of their sins?"

The doctor's face grew crimson. "Here's work for you," he cried. "This child must be fed or she will go with her mother." He took little Elsie from the floor where she had thrown herself in a passion of tears.

Mrs. Allen saw that she had started a subject on which the doctor did not wish to converse, and wisely said no more; but set herself to search the closet for something eatable. "The Lord have mercy," she cried; "there is nothing, not a crumb here! I must go home and get things."

"Yes, yes!" cried the doctor, "jump into my gig. Old Gray is steady, but don't be afraid to let him go quick. I will stay with the dying woman. She won't last till you get back."

I need not continue the story. Imagination will supply what follows. A pauper funeral, a besotted, half-crazed mourner, who is sober enough to realize in some degree, the awful ruin which he has brought on himself and all that were dear to him. He feels an impulse to struggle with his fate, to break his chains and escape, but despair paralyzes him. He knows he will be tempted and he cannot resist temptation, so he must drift on, on, down to perdition. The helpless little one that clings to his hand in heart-breaking misery and destitution cannot save him. While the door of that saloon stands open, and the breath of hell comes to him from it, he will go in leaving her to perish as her mother has perished.—*Morning Star.*

## PROHIBITION IN KANSAS

It is sometimes difficult to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the status of Temperance and Prohibition in Kansas because there are extremists on both sides whose testimony is far from reliable. The advocate of the open saloon keeps the air filled with violent protestations that the prohibitory law is a total failure, while his radical opponent is equally vociferous of his opinion that it is an abiding success. As a matter of fact both these are right and both are wrong. Each can demonstrate the correctness of his opinion by selecting portions of the state from which to collect his evidence. There is much that is successful about prohibition, there is much that is not; but a careful survey of the sixteen years' trial which Kansas has given the law, will disclose to any unbiased mind that the good outweighs the evil.

To thoughtful people the question will not turn upon whether the law has been perfectly or imperfectly enforced, so much as upon whether its influence has been good or bad through the period of its existence. Viewed in this aspect there can be little question that it has been an abundant success.

During its operations Kansas has, undoubtedly, taken, on a condition of

temperance which is little less than astonishing when the bibulous habits of her former days are taken into consideration. In the absence of other reasonable grounds the clamor of the prohibitionists that this temperance reformation was due to prohibition, would seem to be a substantial one.

Twenty years ago Kansas was consuming as much liquor per capita as any State in the Union. It was the fashion for everybody to drink. Political conventions were oftentimes but another name for good old-fashioned drunks. It was rather commendable than otherwise for the candidate to hold an intimate acquaintance with the flowing bowl.

The saloon was the rendezvous of the politician and the birthplace of platforms and politics. The saloon-keeper was himself a power, and shaped in a large degree the destinies of the community in which he plied his avocation. He levied tribute upon parties and candidates with the imperiousness of a Caesar. He was an outlaw in the sense that he disobeyed the statutes of his State with the same frequency and persistency as his successor, the joint-keeper. He sold liquor to drunkards; he sold liquor to minors; he sold liquor on Sunday; he sold liquor after hours fixed for closing; he sold liquor on election days; and in short, he insolently refused to brook the restraint which had been placed upon him in any direction.

It is hardly necessary to say that such a picture would not now fit Kansas. Her political conventions of the present are a model of sobriety and good order. The candidate can find no surer road to overwhelming defeat than to become known as a hard drinker. The drinking place is no longer the rendezvous for the politician. When he goes there he first furtively looks about to discover if he has been observed.

The Kansas joint, as it at present exists, is not the political power of its ancestor, the saloon. It is an unattractive den, hidden away somewhere in dirt and squalor, and its owner is not of the stamp to have influence, either political or otherwise. The glass and warmth and cheer have given place to the repulsiveness of dirty floors, dingy walls, foul smells, and darkness of garrets, or cellars. It is no longer gay and debonaire for the young man to be seen emerging from one of these places; it is a circumstance which covers him with distrust and suspicion. With these two pictures in mind, it is hard indeed to say that the results of Prohibition have been anything but wholesome.—*The Topeka Journal.*

## CHILDREN OF DRUNKARDS

If the evils of intemperance were limited to the lifetime of a drunkard alone, the consequences, however disastrous, would not yet be so dreful as when viewed in the light of hereditary. The children of drunkards rarely possess normal constitutions. A specialist on this subject has tabulated his observations in the *Quarterly Journal of Inebriety*, basing his investigations on twelve families of inebriates and twelve of temperate people.—

	Drinkers.	Temperate
Number of children	57	61
Deaths under one week old	25	6
Idiots	5	0
Dwarfs (stunted in growth)	5	0
Epileptics	5	0
Chorea, ended in lunacy	1	0
Deformed and diseased	5	0
Hereditary drunkards	2	0

Another writer states that "recent studies of alcohol cases show that over 60 per cent. are directly inherited."

—*Alliance News.*

## WASTE AND DECAY

All the alcohol in the world will not contribute a drop of blood, a filament of nerve, a fibrilla of muscle, a speckum of bone, to the human economy. On the contrary, there is death in the cup, waste of strength, decay of substance, destruction of tissue, degeneration of function, material death.

—*Dr. Norman Kerr.*

## ONTARIO W.C.T.U. CONVENTION

DEAR WHITE RIBBONERS:

Before closing your meetings for the summer vacation, we would remind you that on account of the World's and Dominion Conventions being held the last week of October, our Provincial Convention has necessarily to be held at an earlier date than usual, namely, October 12th to 15th. For this reason, it would be advisable for all local and county annual meetings to be held in August, or early in September, at the latest, in order that your work may be fully reported. In some cases perhaps this might cause more or less inconvenience, but if your arrangements could be made *at once* it would obviate any difficulty in this respect.

The Provincial Executive asks your loyal support in making the coming convention one of the most successful ever held.

You will remember that last year we accepted the invitation given the previous year by Guelph to meet in that city, but since then, on account of a large missionary convention to be held there in October, they found it would not be convenient to entertain both. Ottawa invited us, as did also Brantford. While cordially thanking the former city for the kind invitation, the Executive decided to go to Brantford, as we met East last time.

A word about Brantford may not be out of place just here. It is a pretty city, possessing many attractions, and places of interest well worth a visit, and no doubt arrangements will be made for the delegates to see them. Its W.C.T.U. was one of the first organized in Canada, and has done grand work. Its people are kind and hospitable, and will give the members of the Provincial Union a hearty welcome. In making your arrangements for attending the series of W.C.T.U. Conventions, be sure to plan for *Provincial FIRST*, everything else secondary.

It is extremely important that there should be a large attendance at Brantford as we are anticipating the plebiscite, an issue which we have been looking for, hoping for, and working for, for years. Now we are likely to be granted it, no stone must be left unturned to make the issue not only in favor of Prohibition, but overwhelmingly, and conclusively so. It appears that the consideration of this question has been postponed until next session of Parliament, which will delay its submission for another year. It will not do however for us to settle down, and let the time slip by without doing anything, but rather take advantage of the extra opportunity thus afforded, to develop plans of work and arrange for carrying them out.

Our W.C.T.U. has been a very potent factor in the progress of temperance reform, and at the present juncture it behoves us to make our influence felt to the fullest extent. We hope therefore that from all our Unions there will be as large a representation as possible sent to Brantford in October.

Don't forget the date! Oct. 12th to 15th.

By order of the Sub-Executive.

Yours cordially,  
JESSIE CAVERS,  
Vice-Pres., Ont. W.C.T.U.